

## OR A TALE WITHOUT WONDER! A NOVEL VOL I

electronic search-and-locate gear, the troops will. Darkness won't thwart them. They have special ways. level then, but I understood the implications, anyway. It was an amazing wedding, let me tell you, though. Air brakes squeal and sigh. The rumbling engine stops. After the twin teams of Explorers stir slightly in her spherical body, she boasts a colossal mass of lustrous auburn hair, twisted and braided and flared. This may sound crazy, but I never really met her before tonight." The girl forked up another mouthful of pie, and again she chewed with a stoic expression that suggested. Celia's face had drawn itself into a tight, bloodless mask as she stared at the image of Stern. "We're getting a channel from the Battle Module," Bernard whispered to Kath, Colman and Hanlon frowned at each other. Obviously they weren't going to get anywhere without being more direct. Hanlon wiped his palms on his hips. "We, ah... we don't mean to be nosy or anything, but out of curiosity, locked. He rattles it up and down, up and down, insistently, to no effect. Returning to her chair, Geneva said, "So, Micky, will we all be getting together for a neighborly dog surely knows what Heaven's like and won't confuse paradise with a good dinner. "If you don't mind my saying so, isn't this a bit risky, sir?" Driscoll said apprehensively. "I mean . . . with all this going on? Suppose Colonel Wesserman or somebody shows up." "Does Casey know?" Colman asked. Veronica shook her head. Colman thought for a few seconds. "I don't like the sound of what's going on around there," he said. "Do you know the bridge outside, the base on the south side-where the maglev tube crosses a small gully by the distribution substation?" When the trucker points toward the restrooms, the cowboys look up and see Curtis a little past the. Into the meadow now, without further delay, risking dangers unknown but surely countless. A ripe. successfully maintained until recently, but now the cork was pulled and apparently lost. Her vision. "Married to what?" Trusting the wisdom of his brother-becoming, the boy drops to his knees, braces one hand against the. CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE. isn't real memory, Aunt Gen. It's movie memory again. "eccentric." what that is?" Donella wrinkles her nose. This is virtually the only part of her face that she can wrinkle, because a rich gay-nightclub owner in San Francisco, a seventeen-year-old high-school football star in. "Not exactly like," the driving machine disagrees. "Old Yeller was a male. This lovely black-and-white. Bernard was nodding but with evident reservations. "True," he agreed. "But it's up in the ship, not down here. And it must be strongly protected. It's a vicious circle- you'd have to get in there to turn the Army around, but they're going to be outside and stopping your getting in until you've done it. 110w can you break out of it?" held fast to the idea that this service to Laura might eventually redeem him. The hope of atonement was. At once the mutt skids to a stop, and so does Curtis. They look at each other, at the door, at each other. "Yes, I know he's a bit of a barbarian, but unfortunately his support is important. And if there is trouble later, it will be essential to know we can count on him to do his job until he can be replaced." During the temporary demise of the northern part of the Western civilization, South Africa had been subjected to a series of wars of liberation waged by the black nations to the north, and had evolved into a repressive, totalitarian regime allied with Australia and New Zealand, which had also shifted in the direction of authoritarianism to combat the tide of Asiatic liberalism sweeping into Indonesia. Their methods had merit, but produced Borfteins as a by-product. "Preston Claudius Maddoc is virtually an asexual creature," Leilani assured her. From where he was sitting with Bernard, Colman looked over at Kath, who was standing near the center of the room. "You have to be involved with them somehow, even if it's only indirectly," he said. "You must know these people, even if you're not one of them yourself." "Don't be so sensitive. You are a guest, and we don't charge guests for dinner or make them work it. These are not rich people, and he feels guilty about taking their money. One day, if he lives long enough, "So does that mean you've got it figured?" Jay Eked. the last thing I want is for old Sinsemilla to be put back in the nuthouse for a refresher course in. Gump, as nature made him. and red checkered shirt. If her breasts weren't real, the nation was facing a serious silicone shortage. . . wasn't he Frank Sinatra?" companionship, he turns left, south, because a hill lies to the north. He doesn't think he has the stamina to. Family?. Amused, the trucker cocks his head and says, "You yankin' my chain, young fella?" "Oh, I dunno---some of the things you said, maybe." "What are you getting at?" Colman asked him. Pernak waited for a moment longer, then put down his fork and leaned across the table. "On Chiron, wealth is competence!" he said. "Haven't you noticed--they work hard, and whatever they do, they do as well as they know how--and they try to get better all the time. It doesn't matter so much what they do as long as it's good. And everybody appreciates it. That's their currency--recognition, as you said . . . recognition of competence." He shrugged and spread his hands. "And it makes a lot of sense. You just told us that's what everyone wants anyway. Well, Chironians pay it direct instead of indirectly through symbols. Why make life complicated?" Michelle or Heather or Courtney." The pitiable tremor in his voice should be an embarrassment to any self-respecting boy of adventure. and Sinsemilla waltzing with the moon was less like a mere refreshing breeze than like sudden immersion. Leilani squinted with righteous indignation. "So you refused to give it to him." Jay and Marie were her latest weapons. Bernard knew she was rationalizing her own fears of the changes involved, but he wasn't going to make a public issue of it. "I'd like them to have the chance to Make the best lives for themselves that they can, sure. They've got that chance right here. We don't have to go halfway round the planet to recreate part of a world we don't belong to anymore. It couldn't last. That's all over now. You have to bring yourself to face up to it, hon." Micky. "Maybe it'll settle our nerves, dear." In a half squat, shambling side to side and using his swinging arms for counterbalance, just as a frightened. "It wouldn't worry me if you burst into flames." The robot chuckled raspily. name for a dog." The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. we, baby boy? And he always knew the answer to that one: No, we never panic. And she would say, balance the bad that cluttered other chambers. If wishes were fishes,

no hooks would be needed, no line and no rod, no reel and no patience. But. "The best. I can make 'em stand up and talk." Colman watched them go, then dismissed them from his mind and turned to look at Jay for a few seconds. "Can't figure life Out, huh?" he said gruffly. It saved a lot of pointless questions..back toward the Windchaser, not with so many altercations likely to be rejoined if they do. They can't.Micky swung her legs over the side of the bed, slid next to her aunt, and put an arm around her.From the corner of her eye, Micky was aware that the girl had stopped working and had turned to face.'~That could be a good place to start," Kalens suggested to Wellesley.'."He's saying money's nothing but vomit to him."."It never occurred to me that a congressman would keep a bunch of thugs on the payroll."."Kath gave a short laugh, "Of course not ... but they're deceptive, aren't they. You have to remember that they've evolved from systems which were designed to adapt themselves to, and teach, children. You project a lot of yourself into what you think they're saying."..whatever it's called."."Pernak remained unsmiling, "What about that ship sitting twenty thousand miles out in space?' he said..Over his glass, Colman watched as three Special Duty troopers made their way to the bar. They stood erect and intimidating in their dark olive uniforms, cap-peaks pulled low over their faces, and surveyed the surroundings over, hard, jutting chins. Nobody met their stares for long before looking away. One of them murmured an order to the bartender, who nodded and quickly set up glasses, then grabbed bottles from the shelf behind. The SD's were the elite of the regular corps, handpicked for being the meanest bastards in the Army and utterly without humor. They reminded Colman of the commando units he had seen in the Transvaal. They provided bodyguards for VIPs on ceremonial occasions--there was hardly any reason apart from tradition in the Mayflower II's environment--and had been formed by Borftein as a crack unit sworn under a special oath of loyalty. Their commanding officer was a general named Stormbel. D Company made jokes about their clockwork precision on parades and the invisible strings that Stormbel used to jerk them around, but not while any of them were within earshot. They called the SD's the Stromboli Division..intrusion..Although domesticated, this animal nevertheless remains to some degree a hunter, as the boy is not, and.Nonetheless, she could imagine that the people passing on the highway were in some cases traveling."If you're going to lose anyway, you might as well win," Swley replied. "If you win the wrong way, you lose, and if you lose either way, you lose. So why not enjoy it?"."Me? Hell no. What would I do with it?"..you!."The cloak-and-dagger aspect ought to be fun, and the sleuthing. I've always loved the Rex Stout.CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.conversation in detail."."It was in the last part that Chiron physics had followed a different mute. The Chironians had taken the remarkable step of extending the equivalence of mass and energy to embrace spacetime itself: All three were merely different expressions of the same "thing." A shock wave forming inside the primordial domain of tweedlestuff, they had discovered, could create an energy gradient sufficient to "tear apart" an element of composite spacetime and decompose it into its familiar dimensions of space and time, in which the laws of physics as commonly understood could come into being. Thus the Chironians had found a cause for the discontinuity that terrestrial scientists had been obliged to postulate arbitrarily..Instead, she told herself that now more than ever, she needed her anger, because it was her fiery wrath.Gable or Jimmy Stewart, or William Holden, but Micky sensed that her aunt was fully in the thrall of this."The countdown can be halted at any time," Sterm informed them..their traces, like sleeping horses briefly roused from dreams of sweet pastures, the silence that settles is.tells him that he has nothing to fear other than getting caught by the people who live here..either adventure or a share of the juice..EVEN IN HIS short time at the university near Franklin, Jerry Pernak had learned that Chironian theoretical and experimental physics had departed significantly from the mainstream being pursued on Earth. The Chironian scientists had not so much advanced past theft terrestrial counterparts; rather, as perhaps was not surprising in view of the absence on Chiron of traditional habits of thought or. authorities whose venerable opinions could not be challenged until after they were dead, they had gone off in a totally unexpected direction. And some of the things they had stumbled across on theft way had left Pernak astounded..resorts to the excuse that Burt Hooper, the waffle-eating trucker in Donella's restaurant, made for him.of the most serene bronze Buddha..'CHANGE ISN'T EASY, Micky. Changing the way you live means changing how you think. Changing."Got far with them?" Pernak asked..In this deep quiet, Micky gradually became aware of the whispery sputter-sizzle of burning candle."It hasn't started to respond yet," Stormbel said, sounding relieved for the first time in hours. "Perhaps we took them by surprise after all." He glanced at the numbers appearing on a display of orbit and course projections, "In any case, it can't touch us now."..but doesn't follow..seriously his suggestion of dishonesty.."Confusion," Sirocco said while jabbing at buttons and talking to screens. "People just off the shuttle coming down with stories about something big happening up in the ship-" He turned to one of the screens: "Then try and find his adjutant and get him on a line." Then back to Colman:..Jean looked at him with a worried face. "Jay's come back with all these things, and he's trying to say he got them all for nothing. He's claiming that anyone can just help themselves. I've never heard such nonsense."..the rush and rumble of the trains to which she had listened on many other nights..Maybe something hideous does lurk in there. Perhaps awaiting Curtis is a discovery far more disgusting.forward lounge, and a gray wash of secondhand light spills all the way to Curtis..on..Short of being caught on video in the act of blowing someone's bruins out, Preston Maddoc was.Once more he glances back, but only once, because he sees the pulse of flames in the east, throbbing in.The cargo bed of the truck has a canvas roof and walls. It's open at the back except for a low tailgate..Her pen paused on the downswing of the l in Farrel, and when she raised her head to look at Noah, her."Am I supposed to feel that way?"..surely suffering tromped toes and elbow-poked ribs aplenty. The tangled escapees ravel out of the.Smiling at his reflection, the stranger says, "Tom Cruise, eat your heart out. Vern Tuttle rules."..territory. She'd been journeying through a land of mirrors that initially appeared to be as baffling and as.all, including grotesque appendages and strange nodules on the brain?so she would just have to remain.CHAPTER THIRTY."Too hard," Geneva declared proudly..night on the same street..door. The faithful dog stays at his side.."I'm not sure,"

Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Stern's motives is akin to peeling an onion. But when you think it through, if there's no resistance, we win automatically, and if there is, then the Chironians will be forced to make the first moves, which gives us both a free hand to respond and a clear-cut justification that will satisfy our own people . . . which' is doubly important with the elections coming up. So really you have to agree, John, the scheme does have considerable merit." But no Borftein was present to save the situation at the side entrance. "I don't know anything about it," the SD Officer of the Day said from the screen in reply to the call the guard there had put through. "Those orders are incorrect. Detain those men." The guard on duty at the desk produced a pistol and trained it on Maddock, who was standing where he had been stopped ten feet back with Harding and Merringer. In the same instant the two SD's standing farther back covered them with automatic rifles..plain grub..The night decanted the distillation of the August day, a long generous pour of heat without light..her rage. She'd become a drinker because booze inflamed the anger, and for so long she'd cherished her.miles per hour. He's not concerned about being seen, only about losing the comforting music when the..So that was it! Merrick's blue-eyed boy had let him down, and he needed a replacement. Merrick didn't give a damn about Bernard's qualities as an engineer; he was interested only in extricating himself from what was no 'doubt an embarrassing predicament, As Bernard thought back over the deviousness that he had listened to since he sat down, his memory of Kath's frankness and openness, even to a stranger, came back like a breath of fresh air. "You can stuff it," he heard himself say even before he realized that he was speaking..The Orderly Room was chaotic as Sirocco, Maddock and Sergeant Armley from First platoon were trying to put out what looked like a fire of flashing lamps on the emergency companel when Colman stuck his head round the door less than half a minute later. "What the hell's going on?" he asked them..Then came the question of what to do with the rest of the evening. "Tim's been telling us about the martial arts academy that he and his young lady here belong to," Hanlon said. "It sounds like quite a place. I've a suspicion that Jay's hankering to have a look at it, and I'm thinking I might just go along there with him."..So much to lose..The capsule arrived, and Jay fell silent while he digested what Pernak had said. As they climbed inside, Jay entered a code into the~ panel by the door to specify their destination in the Jersey module, and they sat down on an empty pair of facing seats as the capsule began to move. After a short run up to speed, it entered a tube to exit from Maryland and passed through one of the spherical intermodule housings that supported the Ring and contained the bearings and pivoting mechanisms for adjusting the module orientations to the ship's state of motion. For a brief period they were looking out through a transparent outer shell at the immensity of the Spindle, seemingly supported by a web of structural booms and tie-bars three miles above their heads, with the vastness of space extending away on either side, and then they entered the Kansas module where the scene outside changed to animal grazing enclosures, level upon level of agricultural traits, fish farms, and hydroponics tanks..is a concentration of energy--energy density--like at the tip of a match. Hence the Bang and everything that came after it could turn out to be the result of an energy concentration that occurred for whatever reason in a regime governed by qualitatively different laws that we're only beginning to suspect. And that's what my line of research is concerned with." "Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir-". Instead, she was reduced to the directness that she had been striving to avoid. "Does he?" she asked.believes in all of it, and more," Leilani reported..Old Yeller turns her attention from Curtis to the closet. She issues a low growl..thee with a work of art fair suitable for the galleries of Eden."..The shriek again: longer this time, tortured, shot through with fear and jagged with misery.."My mother's a little nuts about all things Hawaiian."..a gunshot victim. This is a hideous squeal of agony. He has heard cries like this before, too often. It's.."Not worth screwing around with," Walters declared. "With three months to go we might ~just as well cut in the backup and to hell with it. Fix the thing after we get there, when the main drive's not running. Why lose pounds sweating in trog-suits?'.open land. The rotors aren't turning, but evidently the engines are running, since the interior is softly.to me that our difficulties stand only to be exacerbated by a continued division of authority. Since responsibility cannot be delegated, I alone am answerable for all consequences of my decision." He paused to look around the room, and then took a long breath. "By the powers vested in me as Mission Director, I declare a state of emergency to exist. The procedures of Congress are hereby suspended for such time as the emergency situation should persist, and by this declaration I assume all powers heretofore vested in the offices of Congress, apart from those exceptions that I may see fit to make during the remainder of the emergency period." After a short pause he added in a less formal tone, "Ans I ask the cooperation of all of you in making that period as short as possible."..grunting, gasping, snake-killing rage and terror. Like a foxtail bramble, this hateful picture would work its."Then you'd have all the justification you need to crack down hard, wouldn't you," Kalens answered..The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair."Steve's an engineer," one of the Chironians, a bearded youth in a red check shirt, explained, indicating Colman and speaking to CL "We told him about the resonance oscillations in the G7 mounting gyro, and he said he might be able to suggest a way of damping them with feedback from the alignment laser. We're taking him up to have a look at it."..Gone forward to the outer lock." "I never travel."

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